CLAIMS

1. (Original)   A method of tracking an item dispenser inventory at a point-of-use,

the method comprising:

establishing a network of computerized item dispensers, each dispenser

containing inventory;

establishing a computer data center, the data center being in electronic

communication with the network;

establishing allocation codes within the data center, the allocation codes

limiting the extent to which inventory is allowed to be withdrawn from the

dispensers;

identifying a user at one of the dispensers; and

allowing the user to reconfigure the allocation codes from the one of the

dispensers.

2. (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

prompting [[a]] the user to enter a login allocation code.

3. (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

displaying a user-specific default value for an allocation code.

4. (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

prompting [[a]] the user to enter a product allocation code.

5. (Original)   The method of claim 4, further comprising:

prompting the user to remove a quantity of items; and

prompting the user to enter a quantity of the removed items.

6. (Withdrawn) A method of tracking an item dispenser inventory at a point-of-
use, the method comprising:

determining a user;

receiving a request for an item from the user;

determining an item inventory based on the request;

determining whether a special order is necessary based on the item

inventory; and

directing the user to a customer-pre-determined merchant for the special

order.

7. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 6, wherein the customer-pre-

determined merchant is a web-based merchant.

8. (Withdrawn)   A method of tracking an item dispenser inventory at a

point-of-use, the method comprising:

determining a user accessibility;

receiving at an item dispenser a request from the user for an item;

determining whether the item is present at the point-of-use item dispenser;

searching whether the item is present at a secondary item dispensers when

the item is not present at the point-of-use item dispenser; and

displaying the secondary item dispenser when the item is present at the

secondary item dispenser.

9. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 8, further comprising:

prompting a user to select an item from a scrolling list if more than one

item is present at the secondary item dispenser.

10. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 9, further comprising:

flashing the secondary item dispenser when the item is selected.

11. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 8, further comprising:

prompting a user to special order when the item is not present at any

secondary item dispenser.

12. (Withdrawn)   A method of tracking an item dispenser inventory at a

point-of-use, the method comprising:

determining a user accessibility;

determining whether an item is to be checked in or out by the user;

assigning a loan period when the item is checked out by the user;

configuring a first customer-pre-defined time period when the checked-out

item is delinquent; and

assigning the checked-out item a consider-consumed status when the

checked-out item is not returned after a second customer-pre-defined time period.

13. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 12, further comprising:

charging the consider-consumed item to the user.

14. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 12, further comprising:

notifying the user of the loan period when the user logs in.

15. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 12, further comprising:

preparing reminders and reports on a delinquent user.

16. (Withdrawn)   A method of tracking an item dispenser inventory at a

point-of-use, the method comprising:

determining a user accessibility;

determining a defective return location based on the user accessibility at

the point-of-use; and

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returning a defective item to the defective return location.

17. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 16, further comprising:

designating a quantity of the defective item.

18. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 16, further comprising:

allowing an authorized user to unload the defective items.

19. (Withdrawn)   A method of tracking an item dispenser inventory at a

point-of-use, the method comprising:

determining a user accessibility;

designating an item as a market research item;

determining whether the market research item is removed by the user;

generating a market research response; and

communicating the market research response to the user.

20. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 19, wherein the market research

response is a survey.

21. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 19, wherein the market research

response includes displaying a video advertisement.

22. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 19, wherein the market research

response is a receipt.

23. (Withdrawn)   A method of tracking an item dispenser inventory at a

point-of-use, the method comprising:

determining a user accessibility;

determining a user-specific work type based on the user accessibility; and

assigning a consumption quota based on the user-specific work type.

24. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 23, wherein the consumption quota

defines a quantity of items to be checked out.

25. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 23, wherein the consumption quota

defines a customer-defined check out period.

26. (Withdrawn)   A method of tracking an item dispenser inventory at a

point-of-use, the method comprising:

    determining a user accessibility;

    determining a user-defined consignment session based on the user

accessibility; and

    marking a consignment inventory when there is a transaction during the

consignment session.

27. (Withdrawn)   The method of claim 26, further comprising:

    reporting the consignment inventory.

28. (New)   A method of managing an inventory in each of a plurality of item

dispensers, the method comprising:

    electronically coupling the plurality of item dispensers to a data center;

    allocating a configurable code of a first user to the inventory at the data

center, the configurable code including an inventory limit to which the inventory

is allowed to be withdrawn from the item dispensers by the first user; and

    allowing a second user to reconfigure the allocated configurable code at at

least one of the item dispensers such that the inventory limit of the first user is

reconfigured.

29. (New)   The method of claim 28, further comprising prompting at least one

of the first user and the second user to enter a login allocation code.

30. (New)   The method of claim 28, further comprising displaying a user-

specific default value for an allocation code.

31. (New)   The method of claim 28, further comprising prompting at least one

of the first user and the second user to enter a product allocation code.

32. (New)   The method of claim 31, further comprising:

prompting at least one of the first user and the second user to remove a

quantity of items; and

prompting at least one of the first user and the second user to enter a

quantity of the removed items.

33. (New)   A system for managing an inventory in each of a plurality of item

dispensing means, the method comprising:

means for electronically coupling the plurality of item dispensing means to

a means for storing data;

means for allocating a configurable code of a first user to the inventory at

the means for storing data, the configurable code including an inventory limit to

which the inventory is allowed to be withdrawn from the plurality of item

dispensing means by the first user; and

means for allowing a second user to reconfigure the allocated configurable

code at at least one of the plurality of item dispensing means such that the

inventory limit of the first user is reconfigured.

34. (New)   The system of claim 33, further comprising means for prompting at least one of the first user and the second user to enter a login allocation code.

35. (New)   The system of claim 33, further comprising means for displaying a user-specific default value for an allocation code.

36. (New)   The system of claim 33, further comprising means for prompting at least one of the first user and the second user to enter a product allocation code.

37. (New)   The system of claim 34, further comprising:

means for prompting at least one of the first user and the second user to remove a quantity of items; and

means for prompting at least one of the first user and the second user to enter a quantity of the removed items.